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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 71/NO. 38 OCTOBER 15, 2007

INSIDE

Activities from Africa to Australia demand 'Free the Cuban Five!'

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Washington debates Iraq partition

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The White House rejected a September 26 nonbinding Senate resolution promoting the division of Iraq into a federation of regional governments. U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in an October 1 interview with the *New York Post* that Iraqis "reacted extremely badly to the idea of partitioning the country."

At the same time, the political, military, and economic policies carried out by the U.S. occupation forces head in the direction of just such a partition.

The Senate resolution, approved 75–23, calls for "actively support[ing] a political settlement among Iraq's major factions" that would "allow for the creation of federal regions." The regions could be modeled after the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG), which the resolution calls "largely stable and peaceful."

Rice acknowledged that Washington is promoting steps to give more power to regional governments, whether or not the Baghdad government decides to formalize them as national policy.

"[E]ven though they haven't passed an oil law, they are on a budget basis distributing the oil revenues to the provinces by formula," she told the *New York Post*. "We're trying to solidify and indeed push forward this very positive

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Myanmar military gov't cracks down on protests

BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, October 2—The military government in Myanmar, formerly Burma, has unleashed a crackdown against working people, students, and Buddhist monks protesting fuel price increases and demanding democratic change.

Rallies began in mid-August after the government announced a fivefold rise in fuel prices. By late September, tens of thousands across the country were protesting. A military dictatorship has ruled Myanmar, a Southeast Asian country of 52 million, for more than four decades.

Buddhist monks, who number 500,000 nationwide, joined demonstrations after the initial protests exploded. "The recent economic hardship has caused monastery populations to swell with students from poor families," reported the September 22 *Financial Times*.

Naing Ko Ko, an exiled representative of the Burma Trade Union Federation, told the *Militant* that the monks are calling on the generals to join a dialogue for "national reconciliation."

Some 100,000 people marched September 24 in the capital, Yangon. Over the following week, troops moved against the monks, beating and hauling

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'We all live in Jena'

Mychal Bell released on bail, faces new trial
Actions demanding justice for Jena 6 continue



Militant/Ben O'Shaughnessy

One hundred students marched in New York October 1, part of nationwide school walkouts.

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON

HOUSTON—Mychal Bell, one of the Black high school students known as the Jena Six, was released on bail September 27—one week after tens of thousands rallied in Jena, Louisiana, to demand his freedom.

Bell was arrested last December, along with five other Black students from Jena High School, after a white student filed charges following a fight. The fight happened after months of harassment of African American students who were protesting racist practices at the school. Physical attacks against African American students went largely unpunished. After Black students held a sit-in under a schoolyard tree, racists hung nooses from the tree but received only brief school suspensions.

Although only 16 at the time, Bell was tried as an adult and convicted by an all white jury of aggravated assault. A state appeals court recently ruled that he should not have been tried in

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ICE raids in N.Y. spark protest

BY LUIS MADRID

HEMPSTEAD, New York—"We are not criminals," said Omar Henríquez, board president of Workplace Project, during a September 27 protest against a wave of raids in central Long Island. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents, backed up by Nassau and Suffolk county cops, arrested 186 immigrant workers September 24–27.

The operations were carried out mostly in homes in towns that included Hempstead, Westbury, Hicksville, Port Washington, Brentwood, Central Islip, and Huntington. In Hempstead, where one car wash was also raided, six men were arrested in one house alone. The predawn raids allegedly targeted suspected gang members with arrest warrants, but the ICE didn't supply the warrants to the local cops until four days after the operations began.

"They pushed their way in, manhandled those inside, yelled at them, threw them on the floor, flipped mattresses, and kicked and busted doors and locks," said a witness to one raid who asked that her name not be used. She described how residents answered the door after heavy banging on it. Children saw their fathers mistreated, handcuffed, and taken away, she said.

In another case, Marlene Martínez told the Spanish-language daily *El Diario/La Prensa* that ICE agents arrested her husband while she was at work, leaving her four-month-old baby alone for several hours.

At least one U.S. citizen was arrested in the raids. She was later released.

A number of those arrested are in detention centers in Brooklyn, New York, where relatives and supporters are trying to get them out on bail.

Immigration authorities "cannot con-

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'Militant' Fund campaign starts

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—As we start the first week of a campaign to raise $100,000 to fund the *Militant*, five new areas have made pledges—now at $96,925. The campaign began September 29 and ends November 25.

The eight-week fund drive coincides with a seven-week campaign to win 2,300 new subscribers to the socialist newsweekly. Combining the fund campaign with the effort to win new readers can maximize contributions to the paper.

A member of the Service Employees

Continued on page 4

'Militant' sub drive kicks off

Top sellers to be recognized each week

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

October 3—*Militant* supporters around the world are kicking into campaign gear as a seven-week drive to win 2,300 new subscribers gets going.

Just five days into the campaign, distributors from 10 cities have raised their local quotas. *Militant* supporters have sold 353 subscriptions so far.

Reaching out with the *Militant* to win new subscribers is the main way to meet workers, farmers, and youth who want to fight against wars, racism, and attacks on living and working conditions. The paper is dedicated to providing clear working-class explanations to unfolding events from preventable mine disasters to protests in Myanmar against the dictatorship there, to the vanguard role of the Black nationality in the United States.

More than 100 people subscribed September 29—the first day of the drive—at antiwar actions in Washington, Los Angeles, and Syracuse, New York. Lisa Potash from Atlanta sold 8 subscriptions in Washington, almost half of them on the bus to the march.

Josefina Otero, a steelworker from Pennsylvania, sold five subscriptions. "It was nothing spectacular, I just told

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Militant/Stu Singer

Willie Cotton sells *Militant* subscription at September 15 peace march in Washington.

Also Inside:

Illinois abortion clinic opens after 3-month fight

BY LAURA ANDERSON

AURORA, Illinois, October 2—A new Planned Parenthood clinic here will open October 9. The clinic has been at the center of three months of actions by both defenders and opponents of a woman's right to choose abortion.

"This is not just a victory for Planned Parenthood, but also a victory for women and families in that area who want access to health care," said Steve Trombley, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood/Chicago Area.

A federal judge refused to allow the clinic to open September 20 in order to scrutinize its occupancy permit. The permit was approved yesterday.

At one rally September 25, 200 abortion rights supporters rallied chanting, "Open the clinic now!"

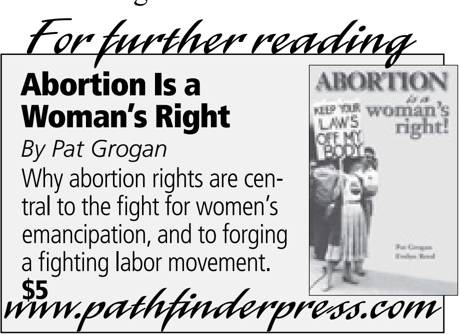
More than 200 abortion rights supporters gathered outside a September 11 City Council meeting. Wearing T-shirts and stickers that said, "This family supports Planned Parenthood," the activists were trying to get into the meeting. There, opponents of a woman's right to choose urged an investigation into the clinic's permit. Abortion rights backers outnumbered rightists at the meeting.

Four days later, 600 protested against abortion rights in front of the clinic. The city revoked the clinic's permit the next day.

President of Planned Parenthood Federation of America Cecile Richards said the September 20 ruling "will only serve to encourage the campaign of harassment and intimidation being waged by anti-choice extremists."

"Abortion is legal," said an Illinois National Organization for Women press release September 25. "Women have the right to decide whether or not to carry a pregnancy to term."

For further reading



Abortion Is a Woman's Right
By Pat Grogan
Why abortion rights are central to the fight for women's emancipation, and to forging a fighting labor movement.
$5
www.pathfinderpress.com



Daniel Grubb

Supporters of a woman's right to choose abortion rally September 25 in Aurora, Illinois.

Pro-business collaboration marks N. Ireland gov't

BY PETE CLIFFORD
AND ÖGMUNDUR JÓNSSON

BELFAST, northern Ireland—A coalition government formed here in May has been marked by collaboration between Sinn Fein and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). For decades the parties were on opposite sides of the Irish national struggle: Sinn Fein led the fight for a united Ireland, and the DUP supported London's control of the north.

The government is led by Ian Paisley of the DUP and Martin McGuinness of Sinn Fein. As it was coming to power, Paisley and McGuinness called on London to lower corporation taxes in northern Ireland to 12.5 percent, the same as those in the Irish Republic. Business tax rates in the United Kingdom are up to 30 percent. Low tax levels on businesses in the south have contributed to the profit boom there. Paisley wants Dublin's economic growth to benefit capitalists in the north. The British government has so far refused to change the rates.

During a recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease among livestock in Britain, Paisley worked with agriculture minister Michelle Gildernew, a Sinn Fein member, to secure exemption from the United Kingdom's restrictions on livestock movement. The two also collaborated to retain free movement across the border with the Irish Republic.

By adopting a policy that Sinn Fein leaders dubbed "Fortress Ireland," Belfast avoided a European Union ban on meat imports from the United Kingdom. "Fortress Ireland" included setting out disinfectant mats at ports and airports and banning movement of livestock from Britain to northern Ireland—measures comparable to those in place in the south. The moves protected the profits of the food industry bosses.

Archbishop Sean Brady, head of the Catholic Church in Ireland, has hailed the new "power-sharing" government. He said he and Paisley share the same views on many social issues, including school segregation of Catholics and Protestants. With job discrimination against Catholics in decline, the system of school and housing segregation here remains a way to divide working people.

London fosters divisions between Protestants and Catholics to maintain their control over northern Ireland, but British imperialism's grip is weakening.

British troops, deployed here since 1969, can no longer be seen on the streets. "Operation Banner," the British Army's brutal policing operation, formally came to an end in July. At the height of the nationalist struggle, London had 27,000 troops occupying the north. The British government still keeps 5,000 troops here—"training" in their barracks.

Visible police presence has also declined. The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), formerly the Royal Ulster Constabulary, received the backing of Sinn Fein for the first time ever earlier this year. The support paved the way for the coalition government. The PSNI, which remains overwhelmingly Protestant, is seeking to recruit Catholics.

Still, huge fortresses marking militarized PSNI bases can be seen throughout Belfast, and cops patrol with armored Land Rovers.

The *Irish News* reports that the Special Branch of the police recently tried to recruit a man to be an informer. Steven Harper said that two officers "said that the Special Branch had changed and they wanted me to spy on certain people in Ardoyne," a Catholic area in north Belfast where Harper lives.

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Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: Send 400 Swedish kronor for one year to Bildhuggarvägen 17, 12144 Johanneshov, Stockholm, Sweden.

New Zealand: Send NZ$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Australia: Send A$50 to P.O. Box 164 Campsie, NSW 2194, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send NZ$50 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Swedish defense minister resigns amid tensions over military transformation

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—Sweden's defense minister Mikael Odenberg resigned here September 5 after a conflict in the government over military funding. The move highlights tensions among the Swedish rulers over the transformation of its armed forces already underway.

Organized during the Cold War to stave off a presumed invasion from the east, the Swedish military is now a force for deployment. About 850 Swedish troops are abroad. Most are part of NATO-led operations in Kosova and Afghanistan, with 385 and 380 troops respectively. The Swedish government has announced its goal to increase the number of troops deployed abroad to 2,000. On September 26 the government asked the military to prepare 200 troops to send to Chad, neighboring the Darfur province in Sudan, where Sweden will also send 140 troops as part of a UN force. The deployment to Darfur has been delayed because of disagreement from the Khartoum government.

Sweden now leads the Nordic Battle Group, a European Union rapid deployment force with 2,800 troops—2,300 of which are Swedish. That force will be able to be deployed within 10 days anywhere in a 600-mile radius of Brussels, Belgium, as of Jan. 1, 2008.

In 1975 the Swedish military could mobilize 730,000 active and reserve troops. Today the number of military employees, including civilians, is 20,600, with an additional 12,600 reservists and 5,000 draftees. The military budget has not decreased to match.

Finance Minister Anders Borg proposed cuts to military funding of almost 10 percent in a July speech. Defense Minister Odenberg resigned after it became clear that the government would back the proposal.

Odenberg was a central figure in the Moderate Party, the dominant party in the center-right government elected in September 2006. Borg and Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt also belong to that party.

Borg's July proposal, which became part of a budget presented September 19, was aimed primarily at cutting spending for military equipment. Reinfeldt and Borg say they will use the money instead to finance tax cuts for employed workers and professionals—as opposed to retirees, the unemployed, and people on sick leave or social welfare. Together with stricter rules for social benefits, these politicians claim the tax cuts will increase the number of employed workers. Promises to do so were a central plank in the Moderate Party's election campaign and part of its self-promotion as a "new workers party."

The funds being cut were used to buy military hardware produced mainly in Sweden. Given its size, Sweden has a

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Myanmar gov't crackdown

Continued from front page

many away, and sealing off pagodas that had become organizing centers.

Guns and tear gas were fired against the thousands of civilians who continued to resist. Activists say that hundreds have been killed, and many more thrown in jail—alongside the 1,100 already there for political "crimes."

Some 20,000 troops are manning barricades in Yangon. "The place is like a graveyard, only dogs could be heard barking," wrote an unidentified Burmese man in a September 29 e-mail printed by the BBC.

The government shut down public Internet access after news of the protests and crackdown was broadcast widely.

Indicating a continued mood of resistance, however, occasional spontaneous protests against the siege have spilled out from shops and workplaces, and dispersed just as rapidly.

Hypocritically posturing as a defender of democracy, U.S. president George Bush announced new sanctions against Myanmar government leaders. The sanctions add to restrictions on trade and investment imposed in 1997 and 2003. The investment of U.S. oil giant Chevron, through its subsidiary Unocal, is exempt from the restrictions.

Government ministers in the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Myanmar is a member, issued a statement expressing "revulsion" over reports that "the demonstrations . . . are being suppressed by violent force."

European Union members threatened to extend already existing economic sanctions. The French oil company Total has major holdings inside Myanmar.

The Associated Press noted that the governments of China, India, and Russia are "ruling out sanctions as they jostle for a chance to get at Myanmar's bountiful and largely untapped natural resources, especially its oil and gas." Companies from south Korea and Thailand are also exploring energy extraction in Myanmar.

Alongside this new oil rush, more than 30 percent of Myanmar's citizens live below the poverty line. Per capita gross domestic product is less than one-quarter that of Thailand, Myanmar's semicolonial neighbor.

According to the CIA *World Factbook*, of the 70 percent of Myanmar's population living in rural areas, 37 percent do not own land or livestock. A bullock-drawn cart is the most common means of rural transportation.

The army numbers 400,000. Its forces have more than doubled since the current junta was consolidated in 1989.

The military has ruled the country since a coup staged by General Ne Win in 1962. He had been a prominent leader of the government elected after independence was won from Britain following World War II.

Students and others seized on Ne Win's retirement in 1988 to stage massive anti-military demonstrations. The generals launched a bloodbath, killing up to 10,000 demonstrators. They placed Aung San Suu Kyi, the most prominent opposition figure, under house arrest.

In 1990 Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy won elections in a landslide. The junta blocked the new parliament from meeting.

Washington march and rally protest war in Iraq



Militant/Maura DeLuca

Members of the University of Tennessee's Progressive Student Alliance march behind banner signed by fellow students at September 29 peace demonstration in Washington, D.C.

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, September 29—A march and rally here today protested the U.S.-led war in Iraq, in the second of three national antiwar actions this fall.

"Stop the war and fight racism here at home," was the theme of the demonstration of 2,500, organized by the Troops Out Now Coalition. Banners and placards supported legalization for immigrants, more funding for schools and healthcare, and rebuilding New Orleans, among other issues.

Larry Holmes, one of the rally chairs, said the antiwar movement must "reach out to our troops." He introduced retired army colonel Ann Wright, and Adam Kokesh of the Iraq Veterans Against the War. Wright participated in U.S. military operations in Grenada and Somalia.

"The war in Iraq is bad policy," said Kokesh, a former Marine sergeant. "It's bad for national security, bad for fighting terrorism, and bad for the image of our nation."

Kokesh's and Wright's remarks reflected the tactical differences between many liberals and the Bush administration over how best to defend U.S. "national" interests.

Some placards at the march called for dropping charges against the Jena Six, who are Black high school students facing potentially long prison terms after challenging racist practices at their school in Louisiana (see story on front page).

"We had 10 buses go to the rally in Jena," Elizabeth Barger, a farmer from Summertown, Tennessee, said proudly. Barger, who is white, said, "I knew what the Jena thing was about as soon as I heard it. It smells of the past."

"I came because it's important to show we're against this war," said Khalia Kwali, who was marching with the District Council 37 union contingent from the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Members of the American-Iranian Friendship Committee marched behind a banner that read "End the war on Iran! Lift the sanctions!"

The Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party contingent held signs demanding immediate withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq, Afghanistan, and anywhere else they are stationed.

The protest was preceded by a week-long "People's Encampment" of 200 in front of the Capitol.

Elsewhere, about 500 people marched and rallied in Los Angeles. Among those marching were three striking workers from Prudential Laundry in Vista, California, who are fighting to win union recognition. A rally in Syracuse, New York, drew 1,000.

The antiwar coalition United for Peace and Justice (UFPJ) has called regional protests in 11 cities on October 27, including New York, Boston, New Orleans, Los Angeles, and San Francisco. For more information contact UFPJ at (212) 868-5545 or www.unitedforpeace.org.

Osborne Hart and Emily Paul contributed to this article. Naomi Craine contributed from Los Angeles.

CALENDAR

Meetings to celebrate 'Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution'

SCOTLAND

GLASGOW

Speakers: Caroline Hoy, researcher and speaker on Chinese migration; Jonathan Silberman, Pathfinder Books, London. Thur., Oct. 18. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. *University of Glasgow, Bute Gardens, Adam Smith Building, Room T316. Email: Pathfinder.ed@btinternet.com, Tel: 07931571503.* Sponsors: Scottish Centre for Chinese Social Science Research, University of Glasgow; Pathfinder Books, Edinburgh.

EDINBURGH

Speakers: Caroline Hoy, Jonathan Silberman. Fri., Oct. 19. Reception, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. *University of Edinburgh, George Square, David Hume Tower, Faculty Room South. Email: Pathfinder.ed@btinternet.com Tel: 07931571503.* Sponsors: Confucius Institute for Scotland in the University of Edinburgh; Pathfinder Books, Edinburgh; Edinburgh University Chinese Students Association.

NATIONAL MOBILIZATION TO END THE WAR IN IRAQ

Sat., Oct. 27. Boston; Chicago; Jonesborough, TN; Los Angeles; New Orleans; New York; Orlando, FL; Philadelphia; Salt Lake City; San Francisco; Seattle. Sponsor: United for Peace and Justice. *For more information, see directory on p. 8 or visit www.Oct27.org.*

‘Bring the troops home!’ demand Young Socialists at marches, campus event

This column is written and edited by members of the Young Socialists, a revolutionary socialist youth organization. For more information contact the YS at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018; tel.: (212) 629-6649; e-mail: youngsocialists@mac.com.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN ACTION

BY EMILY PAUL

WASHINGTON, D.C. September 29—Marching behind a banner reading, “Not one penny, not one person for Washington’s wars! Bring the troops home now,” Young Socialists from half a dozen cities joined a march here today against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The contingent also included signs like, “Hands off Iran!,” and “Justice for the Jena Six!”

YS members and socialist workers came on buses and carpools from across the East Coast and Midwest with students from Goucher College, Temple University, the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, and other campuses.

“This is my first demonstration,” said Anna Shelton, 19, a garment worker from Bowden, Georgia, who marched with the YS. “As soon as I heard about the demonstration I decided to jump in the car and go.”

“We met other young people who wanted to discuss the war in the context of struggling against imperialism,” said Robert Silver, 22, a member of the YS from Minneapolis. “Many were there to discuss more than just the war in Iraq.”

A Militant Labor Forum here after the action featured a report-back from a protest in Jena, Louisiana, to demand justice for the Jena Six. Speakers included Peter Carr, president of the Howard University chapter of the NAACP; Joshua Senavoe, student body president of the Howard University Law School; and Ben O’Shaughnessy, organizer of the YS national steering committee. Socialist Workers Party leader Sam Manuel chaired the forum.

YS members also joined antiwar actions today in Los Angeles and Syracuse, New York.

Ben Joyce and Michael Ortega contributed to this article.

❖

BY CASEY LOGAN

ALBANY, New York—A September 27 meeting on the growing crisis of imperialism and working class resistance kicked off the Young Socialist’s fall activities at the State University of New York here. More than 15 students and others attended the campus event.

“The U.S. rulers this week used the visit by [Iran’s] President Ahmadinejad to further whip up support for their ‘war on terror,’” said YS leader Ben O’Shaughnessy, the featured speaker. “They played up reactionary protests to further their war drive against Iran, Syria, north Korea, and any other government that will not bow to their dictates.”

O’Shaughnessy encouraged others to join antiwar actions and demand, “U.S. hands off Iran” and “Bring the troops home now from Iraq, Afghanistan, and any other country where they are stationed.” He also reported on a September 20 protest in Jena, Louisiana, to demand justice for six Black youth facing possible prison for fighting racist provocations.

During the discussion, two students asked what the YS thought young people should do come election time. O’Shaughnessy said that YS members will support and run candidates on the Socialist Workers Party ticket in 2008. He said that SWP candidates put forward a working-class alternative, independent of the Democrats and Republicans and any other capitalist party.

Ben Joyce, a member of the YS on campus announced an October 11 meeting on campus to demand the release of five framed-up Cuban revolutionaries held in U.S. jails and to discuss the life and political contributions of Ernesto “Che” Guevara. The meeting is part of a series of activities for Latino Heritage Week at the university and is sponsored by the YS and Fuerza Latina.



Militant/Maura DeLuca

Young Socialists Ingrid Franco (left) from Newark, New Jersey, and Loretta VanPelt from Atlanta lead YS contingent at September 29 march on Washington against the Iraq war.

Fall ‘Militant’ Subscription Drive
Sept. 29 – Nov. 18

Country	Quota	Sold	%
SWEDEN	30	13	43%
CANADA*	125	35	28%
AUSTRALIA*	45	7	16%
UNITED STATES			
Washington, DC*	125	51	41%
Houston*	90	33	37%
Pittsburgh*	60	14	23%
Philadelphia	105	24	23%
Newark, NJ*	120	19	16%
Albany, NY	20	3	15%
Boston	60	9	15%
San Francisco*	120	18	15%
Los Angeles	95	13	14%
Miami*	140	19	14%
Chicago*	90	12	13%
Atlanta	250	32	13%
Seattle	95	12	13%
New York*	315	31	10%
Twin Cities*	130	11	8%
Des Moines, IA	125	3	2%
Denver	6	0	0%
U.S. Total	1946	304	16%
NEW ZEALAND	55	6	11%
UNITED KINGDOM			
Edinburgh	50	0	0%
London	70	0	0%
UK Total	120	0	0%
Int’l totals	**2321**	**365**	**16%**
Should be	2300	0	0%

* Raised goal

Florida conference takes up anti-immigrant law

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

WINTER PARK, Florida—The Florida Immigrant Coalition and Students Working for Equal Rights held a conference at Rollins College here September 21–23. Students, farm workers, and members of immigrant rights organizations made up the more than 100 people attending.

The conference discussed how to protest a bill now before the Florida House of Representatives. The law would limit drivers’ licenses to those with legal documents; require immigration checks on people applying for public benefits or those arrested for driving or boating under the influence; and require public employers, contractors, and subcontractors to participate in a federal program to check immigration status. It would also establish as an “unfair trade practice” hiring an undocumented worker the same day a U.S. citizen or permanent resident is fired. The law would prohibit local restrictions on enforcing immigration law or reporting immigration status.

A number of high school students attended the conference. Many said that they cannot attend college because they lack residency papers or Social Security numbers.

Several participants advocated passage of the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, which would permit some immigrant students who have grown up in the United States to apply for legal status after meeting numerous conditions over a number of years.

A few days later in Homestead, Florida, more than 100 people rallied against Social Security no-match letters. They also demanded legalization for immigrants and an end to raids and deportations. Sponsors included the immigrant rights organization We Count!, The Farmworkers Association, American Friends Service Committee, CODI of Miami as well as the boss organization Florida Nursery, Growers and Landscape Association.

Subscriptions

Continued from front page

them that it describes imperialist wars around the world and the attacks on our rights at home,” she said. “If they only got a single copy I would say, ‘For only $4 more you can get ongoing coverage sent to you.’”

Militant supporters Mike Taber and Willie Cotton attended a September 27 meeting in Orange, New Jersey, to discuss the next steps in the fight for justice for the Jena Six. They sold four subscriptions to the six other participants in the meeting.

We will print the top subscription sellers in the *Militant* each week. Local sub drive directors should send the names of the top sub-getters in their area and the number of subs they sold by Wednesday mornings at 9:00 a.m. eastern time. We’ll also print the name of the person who sold the most subs overall at the end of the drive—it could be you!

Join the effort! Contact *Militant* distributors near you listed on page 8.

‘Militant’ Fund

Continued from front page

International Union contributed $10 to the fund after stopping at the Pathfinder booth at the Baltimore Book Fair, reports Janice Lynn from Washington, D.C. Volunteers at the booth sold 71 titles and 15 subscriptions to the *Militant.*

Socialist workers sold 8 subscriptions, 39 single copies of the *Militant*, and 6 Pathfinder titles off a table in Bedford Stuyvesant, a working-class Black neighborhood in Brooklyn, New York, reports Dan Fein. Two people also dropped contributions to the fund in a collection can on the table. The New York Militant Labor Forum hall features a large chart showing weekly progress in the fund campaign, including a donation slot and contribution envelopes.

International pledges remain $3,075 short of the goal.

To make a contribution, contact local distributors listed on page 8 or send checks payable to the *Militant* at the address listed on page 2.

$100,000 ‘Militant’ Fund Drive
Sept. 29 – Nov. 25

Country	Quota
AUSTRALIA	1,400
CANADA	4,100
NEW ZEALAND	3,000
SWEDEN	700
UNITED KINGDOM	
Edinburgh	650
London	1,650
UK total	2,300
UNITED STATES	
Albany, NY	125
Atlanta	9,000
Boston	2,800
Chicago	6,000
Des Moines, IA	2,000
Houston	3,000
Los Angeles	8,500
Miami	3,000
Newark, NJ	3,500
New York	15,000
Philadelphia	3,500
Pittsburgh	3,500
San Francisco	11,000
Seattle	7,000
Twin Cities	4,700
Washington, D.C.	2,800
U.S. total	85,425
Intl’l totals	**96,925**
Goal/Should be	**100,000**

ON THE PICKET LINE


AFP/Getty/Frajhana Khan Godhuly

Locked-out garment workers fight cops at September 22 demonstration in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Thousands of workers protest low pay in Egypt, Bangladesh

On September 23, some 27,000 textile workers in Mahalla al-Kubra, Egypt, went on strike against the Misr Helwan Spinning and Weaving Company. The strikers are demanding that the company live up to an agreement to pay them an annual bonus of 45 days' wages. They also call for freeing five of their leaders who are in jail, and for firing the head of the company.

In Dhaka, Bangladesh, 10,000 garment workers defied a government ban on public demonstrations and took to the streets September 22 after their employer, Nassa Group, locked them out. The workers are demanding better pay, including a higher annual bonus. They currently earn about $25 a month.

—Cindy Jaquith

Atlanta cab drivers launch union organizing drive

ATLANTA—Hundreds of taxi drivers met here September 19 to launch a union organizing drive. Nine days earlier, airport cabbies carried out an impromptu five-hour strike over job conditions.

"The cops harass us all the time," cab driver Sayid Omar, 30, told the *Militant.* He said a police officer recently gave him a $90 ticket for impeding traffic. When he asked how he was impeding, the cop issued him another ticket for disobeying an officer.

Yusuf, who declined to give his last name, explained that the airport staging area has only 300 parking places. Drivers can end up circling the airport for hours before getting into the parking area, and then wait another three to four hours for a fare. Drivers also cited rising costs, including $700 a month for their license, gas, and car maintenance.

More than 1,000 cab drivers, the majority of whom are African immigrants, work at Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.

—Karl Butts

Natives in Canada protest uranium mining



Militant/Mark Grieve

ARDOCH, Ontario, September 22—A rally of Native people and their supporters here today sent off a canoe caravan to demand a moratorium on uranium mining. The canoes are heading from this small southeast Ontario town to Ottawa, site of the federal government.

Natives occupied a uranium exploration site on land they claim near Sharbot Lake June 29. The occupation has continued despite an August 27 court injunction.

The Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, the Shabot Obaadijwan First Nation, and the Community Coalition Against Uranium Mining all participated in today's rally of 70. Robert Lovelace, a retired chief of the Ardoch Algonquin First Nation, told the rally that the delegation was "taking a message to the other governments . . . that the land we share with them must be regarded the way we do—as a sacred trust."

—JOE YOUNG

Workers around world face rising food prices

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Rising food prices are hitting working people around the world, in many cases sparking protests.

A major cause of the inflation is grain prices. Corn prices doubled in one year from early 2006, and the price of wheat has jumped 60 percent since January.

Grain is used to feed livestock, which means that meat prices are also going up. Tyson Foods, Inc., for example, raised its chicken prices three times this year.

In the United States, grocery store bills went up 8 percent the first half of 2007. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, food prices increased at double the rate of the previous year.

In advanced capitalist countries, food amounts to between 10 and 20 percent of household spending. In the underdeveloped nations of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, food is a far larger portion of a working-class family's budget—making price spikes even more devastating. In India, food is on average about 46 percent of household expenses. In some of the world's most impoverished nations, workers spend as much as 65 percent of their income on food, according to the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization.

On September 18, hundreds of people in suburbs outside Conakry, capital of the African nation Guinea, demonstrated, threw rocks, and burned tires to protest high food prices. A 50-kilogram (.45 kilos = 1 lb.) bag of rice there sells for about 120,000 Guinean francs (about $30). A mid-level civil servant in Guinea makes about 150,000 francs a month.

In Mexico, flour prices rose 47 percent as the price of a bushel of wheat went from $4.90 in January to $8.50 in August. The baking industry now projects raising bread prices by 15 to 17 percent. Protests broke out in Mexico's main cities last January after the price of corn flour and tortillas skyrocketed.

Basic cereal prices in Bangladesh increased by 22 percent in the first three weeks of August alone. The international price for a metric ton of high quality rice went from $260 in 2005 to $340 this year.

The price jumps have also spread to Central Asia. In Kyrgyzstan, bread prices have gone up 50 percent in the last few months. The government has revised inflation projections for this year from 5–6 percent to 9 percent.

In neighboring Uzbekistan, bread prices have jumped between 50 and 100 percent. A kilogram of meat that used to cost $3.75 now costs $6.00. According to a UN news agency, demonstrations have taken place against high prices in the Uzbek towns of Oltioriq, Andijon, Namangan, and Ferghana.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

25 CENTS

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

October 15, 1982

Iranian forces have scored fresh victories in that country's efforts to end the two-year-old counterrevolutionary war launched by the Saddam Hussein dictatorship in neighboring Iraq.

In the heaviest fighting since July, Iranian troops and volunteers routed Iraqi units from about 90 square miles of Iranian territory in an area along the border between the two countries.

Saddam Hussein's aim when he sent his troops and armor into Iran in September 1980 had been to topple the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini and weaken the Iranian revolution. Hussein feared the impact that the massive upsurge of the Iranian toilers was having on Iraqi working people. This fear was shared by Washington and other imperialist powers.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

October 14, 1957

Launched Oct. 4 and now circling earth some 560 miles out in space at about 18,000 miles per hour, the Soviet Union's man-made "moon" represents a stupendous stride in man's understanding of the world and the universe. But this awesome scientific achievement has been greeted by the Big Business press and leading figures in this country with scarcely concealed chagrin. Indeed, as its full significance sinks in, the reaction of American top circles approaches what might be called "controlled panic."

Since 1945, when Truman ushered in the atomic age by slaughtering 200,000 Japanese civilians with just two A-bombs, U.S. imperialism has been brandishing its military superiority all over the globe. Now the Soviet Union has actually beaten mighty U.S. capitalism to the punch.

THE MILITANT

Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

October 15, 1932

For the second time in less than five years, the former head of the Communist International, Gregory Zinoviev, and the former chairman of the Russian party's Political Bureau, Leo Kamenev, have been expelled by the ruling faction in the Russian party. From its own internal evidence only one thing is clear: the charges against Zinoviev and Kamenev, as well as the other 22 party members who were expelled along with them, are a typical product of that disloyalty and rudeness for which Lenin stigmatized Stalin and demanded his removal from the post of general party secretary.

Now more than ever before must Lenin's last counsel to the party be heeded: REMOVE STALIN! Restore the party to itself and to its rights and powers!

Activities from Africa to Australia demand 'Free the Cuban Five!'

From Africa to Australia to the United States, actions continue in the international campaign to win freedom for five Cuban revolutionaries unjustly held in U.S. jails

Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González, and René González were tried and convicted in Miami in 2001 for "conspiracy to commit espionage" for the Cuban government, "conspiracy to act as unregistered foreign agents," and, in the case of Hernández, "conspiracy to commit murder."

The Cuban Five, as they are known, were in south Florida gathering information on right-wing Cuban American groups known to carry out violent attacks on Cuba in collusion with the U.S. government.

Below are reports on events in support of the Five that are part of an international month of solidarity which ends October 8.

❖

BY RÓGER CALERO

NEW YORK—Cuba's foreign minister Felipe Pérez Roque spoke at a September 24 meeting here with supporters of the campaign to free the Cuban Five. Pérez Roque was in New York for the United Nation's General Assembly.

"It has been impossible for the U.S. government to maintain Cuba in a cage," he said. He pointed to the more than 100 countries that have diplomatic relations with Cuba, and the island's collaboration with more than 120 countries in education and health programs. The foreign minister thanked those present for their support in the efforts to free the five Cuban revolutionaries.

Leonard Weinglass, one of the attorneys for the five Cubans, gave an update on the legal efforts to win their freedom. He reported that Fernando González has been moved from a federal prison in Wisconsin to another one in Indiana. "We don't know whether a planned visit to Fernando, or the growing support for him in Wisconsin has anything to do with the move," he said.

❖

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Youth from Equatorial Guinea who have studied in Cuba were among the participants in a recent meeting in solidarity with the Cuban Five in Malabo, the capital of that west African nation, according to a September 13 news release from the Cuban consular office there.

Fidel Ernesto Verdecia, a Cuban attorney, spoke on the trial of the five. During the discussion participants noted that relatives of the Five are on tour in Africa, having recently visited Angola. Three of the Five were among the 300,000 Cuban volunteer troops who fought alongside the Angolan army to defeat a U.S.-backed invasion by the South African army of the apartheid regime.

Daniel Sima Mikó (left), coordinator of the Cuban Five Solidarity Committee in Equatorial Guinea, and Cuban attorney Fidel Ernesto Verdecia at September 12 conference in Malabo.

Present at the meeting were Cuban ambassador Víctor Dreke; Venezuelan chargé d'affaires Alex Holmqvist; José Nguema, president of the Association of Equatoguinean Graduates from Cuba; Francisco Edú, secretary general of the Socialist Party of Equatorial Guinea; and Daniel Sima Mikó, coordinator of the Cuban Five Solidarity Committee of Equatorial Guinea.

❖

BY JOANNE KUNIANSKY

SYDNEY, Australia—Thirty people attended a September 21 screening of the documentary *Posada Carriles: Terrorism Made in USA.*

The Venezuelan-made film traces nearly five decades of violent attacks against Cuba by CIA-trained murderer Luis Posada Carriles. These include the 1976 bombing of a Cuban airliner over Barbados that killed 73 passengers, a deadly string of Havana hotel bombings in 1997, and a foiled attempt to assassinate Cuban president Fidel Castro in Panama in 2000.

Protests around the world have demanded that the U.S. government extradite Posada to Venezuela so that he can be tried for his crimes.

The film showing raised $450 toward an April 2008 speaking tour of Australia and New Zealand by Leonard Weinglass, the attorney for Antonio Guerrero. More than $9,000 has been raised.

❖

BY OMARI MUSA

MIAMI—More than 60 supporters of the Cuban Five attended a September 16 meeting here sponsored by Alianza Martiana, a coalition that calls for ending restrictions on travel to Cuba.

Andrés Gómez, director of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, welcomed everyone and introduced Max Lesnik, a popular Radio Miami commentator.

Lesnik spoke about provocative air flights over Cuban territory by the Miami-based rightist group Brothers to the Rescue. In 1996, the Cuban air force shot down two of the group's planes when they violated Cuban airspace. Gerardo Hernández was found guilty of "conspiracy to commit murder" for allegedly providing the Cuban government with flight plans of the rightists.

"The U.S. government knew what [Brothers to the Rescue] were planning and doing," Lesnik said. "Their aim was to provoke a military confrontation between Cuba and the U.S."

"It's been almost 10 years since the five were arrested," Gómez said. "The reason the five are in jail is that the U.S. government has not been able to overthrow the Cuban Revolution and seeks all ways to make the Cuban people pay. The fight to free the five will be a long one, and we will continue until they are freed."

❖

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—About 60 people attended a September 28 showing of *The Process*, a new film narrated by Danny Glover, about the trial of the

Continued on page 7

Cubans discuss culture, revolution at Toronto event

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

TORONTO—Three Cuban artists and writers addressed a meeting on "Cuba: Culture and Revolution" here September 13.

Speakers were Nicolás Hernández Guillén, president of a foundation that makes the poetry of his grandfather, Nicolás Guillén, more accessible; acclaimed Cuban poet Nancy Morejón; and Norberto Codina, director of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, a magazine published by the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba. Chaired by Keith Ellis, a retired professor of Caribbean literature at the University of Toronto, the meeting was attended by 85 people. Among those in the audience was Austin Clarke, author of several novels on the difficult lives of Caribbean immigrants in Toronto.



Militant

Cuban poet Nancy Morejón speaks at the University of Toronto September 13. To her left is Keith Ellis, retired professor of Caribbean literature. To her right is Nicolás Hernández Guillén. Writer Norberto Codina is seated at the far right. Beside him is a translator.

"The 1961 literacy campaign confirmed the popular character of the Cuban revolution," said Hernández. "This massive mobilization, in particular of young people, succeeded in eradicating illiteracy in Cuba in a few months. Today growing popular access to science, art, and culture strengthens the revolution and our capacity to defend ourselves."

"I am a product of the literacy campaign," said Morejón. "When I got involved in this campaign, I knew this was part of building a new society."

"The cultural process taking place in Cuba is like the revolution itself, full of lights, shadows, and contradictions," said Codina. "This process began with the revolution. It went through a gray period in the early 1970s, marked by attempts by dogmatic and orthodox sectors to impose their views on the cultural policy of the revolution. It is deepening today through what is known in Cuba as the Battle of Ideas."

"Cuban people use this greater access to art and culture as a tool to confront social problems, such as the marginalization of a sector of the youth," added Hernández.

"Through this process, Cubans are becoming more confident, take more responsibility for the revolution, and develop their sense of criticism," said Morejón.

Codina noted that "*La Gaceta de Cuba* contributes in redefining what is Cuban culture by publishing works of Cuban artists and writers living outside Cuba. *La Gaceta* has also served as a platform for a discussion on racism."

"Cuban artists and writers are involved in the defense of the revolution," said Morejón during the discussion. She described *Desde la Soledad y la Esperanza* (From Solitude and Hope), a new book by Cuban writers, poets, and painters in defense of the Cuban Five. The Cuban Five are Cuban revolutionaries currently jailed in the United States on frame-up conspiracy charges.

The meeting discussed education in Cuba and the role of the army in the Battle of Ideas. One participant returning from a stay in a rural area of Cuba this summer said that he was struck by "the openness of Cubans on questions such as gay rights."

The meeting was sponsored by the radio station CKLN; three book centers oriented to the Black community, Ashanti Room, A Different Booklist, and Burke's Bookstore; the Free the Cuban Five Committee; the Free the Cuban Five Cultural Committee; and Pathfinder Books, distributor in Canada of *La Gaceta de Cuba*.

A similar meeting in Montreal September 9 was chaired by Marie-Madeleine Raoult, the director of Pleine Lune, a Quebec publishing house. More than a third of the more than 40 participants there were Quebec artists and writers who wanted to know more about Cuba and establish relations with a Cuban publishing house.

The two meetings raised more than $600 to cover part of the costs of the participation of Cubans in the convention of the Latin American Studies Association, held in Montreal September 5–8.

Forum in Chicago protests racist vandalism

BY ILONA GERSH

CHICAGO—Supporters of the *Militant* here defended their right to hold public meetings without political harassment with a successful September 28 Militant Labor Forum. The forum, part of a weekly series of workers' political meetings, was titled "Justice for the Jena 6! Drop the charges now! What can be done next in the fight against racism—From Jena to Chicago?"

Racist and anti-gay graffiti were scrawled on the window of the Militant Labor Forum hall above a display of copies of the *Militant* September 23. The headline of the paper read: "Justice for the Jena 6! Drop the charges now!" The windows also displayed a T-shirt demanding justice for the Jena Six, and books by Malcolm X, Che Guevara, and others published by Pathfinder Press.

The forum, called before the racist attack, was a panel discussion by participants who went as part of a Chicago contingent of 1,000 to a September 20 march and rally in Jena, Louisiana.

Shakria Hall, a student at Chicago State University, told the audience of nearly 30 that her grandmother and mother were worried for her safety in Jena. "Mom said, 'Someone else can go,'" she said. "But what if everyone had said that during the civil rights movement? Where would we be today? It's up to us now. It's up to the young people of the world."

Ashunda Harris, the aunt of 18-year-old Aaron Harrison who was killed by Chicago cops in August, explained how solidarity can unite different struggles for justice. She reported that her sister, Aaron's mother, was headed to the forum earlier that evening, but heard the news of another killing on Chicago's south side and went there instead to give solidarity to the family.

"We need to give people a way to respond to what is happening," said Harris. "If there's no action posed, there will be no results. Everybody has to join forces. All of our causes are basically the same." She voiced support for an upcoming rally in support of the Planned Parenthood clinic in Aurora, Illinois, which anti-abortion forces want to prevent from opening. "We need that clinic so that we can make choices," she said. "Having a child or not should be a woman's choice."

"The only difference between Jena and Chicago is a bus ride," said Laura Anderson of the Socialist Workers Party. She pointed out that the fight against racism is not new, but follows decades of struggle from Radical Reconstruction following the Civil War to the civil rights movement of the 1960s. "We need to win more fights, build solidarity where anyone is fighting for dignity."

Anderson also spoke about a recent rash of arrests and killing of Black youth by cops in Chicago.

A CBS-TV news report of the vandalism against the Militant Labor Forum hall was shown at the beginning of the program, and after a lively discussion, $125 was collected to help defray the costs of the forum's defense.



Militant/Ilona Gersh

Ashunda Harris, whose nephew Aaron Harrison was killed by Chicago cops, speaks at September 29 Militant Labor Forum on "Justice for Jena 6!" Seated are fellow panelists Laura Anderson (center), Socialist Workers Party, and Shakria Hall, a student at Chicago State.

Racists beat Black student in Florida

BY MAGGIE TROWE

MIAMI—An 18-year old Black student was beaten by racists at Haulover Beach in Miami as he was returning from a party on a nearby island early September 23.

Stephen Barrett, a freshman at Florida International University, was on a boat coming back from the party that he attended with two friends, Christopher Eden and Daniel Cabezas. When the captain told passengers the boat was overloaded, several young men told Barrett to get off. Bystanders said one of the youths told Barrett, "Get off the boat, nigger."

Barrett and his two friends got off and waited for the next boat, but when they arrived on shore the youths who had verbally attacked Barrett were waiting, armed with baseball bats, and attacked them.

Barrett was taken to the hospital and released later in the day.

Police arrested five young men—Miguel Aranda, Jose Osorio, Gilberto Maakaroun, Nicholas Checa, and Marino Biondini. All but Osorio were charged with assault and "prejudice while committing a crime." Osorio was charged with aggravated battery. Aranda and Maakaroun are also charged with attempted felony murder.

Cabezas told the *Miami Herald* that Aranda and Osorio were not involved in the attack. He said another teen who helped lead the attack remains at large.

A coalition of Black ministers held a September 27 press conference in Overtown, one of Miami's Black communities, denouncing the attack as part of a "wave of social hatred" and tying it to the case of the Jena Six.

"My biggest concern was that the behavior in Jena would not be mirrored in my community," said Carl Johnson, minister at the 93rd Street Baptist Church, who joined in the September 20 protest in Jena, Louisiana. "My biggest fear has become a reality."

Actions press justice for Jena 6

Continued from front page

adult court. Reed Walters, the district attorney prosecuting the case, said he would appeal but abandoned that course shortly before Bell walked out on bail. If he is found guilty in juvenile court, Bell could be imprisoned until he turns 21.

Tens of thousands rallied in Jena and in solidarity actions across the country September 20 to demand justice for the Six.

"I am glad he is finally out of jail," said Latasha Cooper, a Texas Southern University (TSU) journalism student. "But I don't see why he should have to go to court again. Hasn't he done enough time for them already?" Cooper, who went with busloads of fellow students to Jena on September 20, added that TSU students are organizing another campus protest.

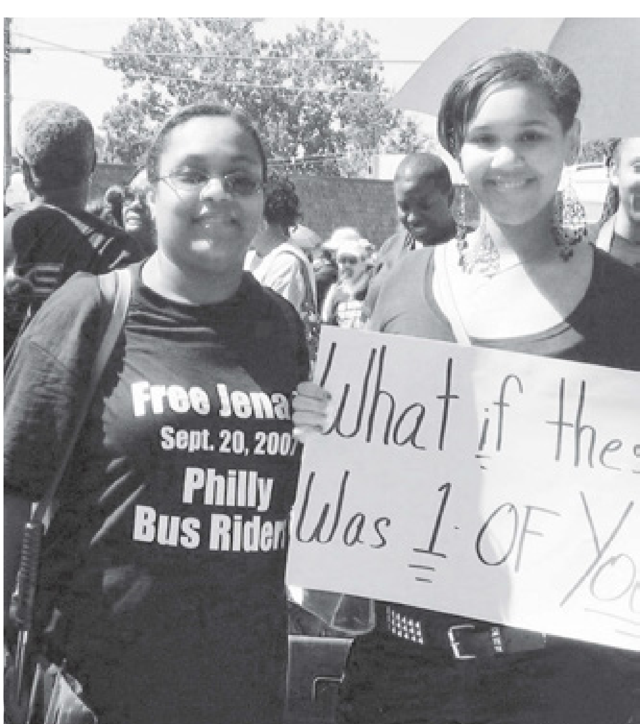
On September 29, more than 100 protesters marched through the streets of Hartford, Connecticut, chanting, "Free the Jena Six!"

On October 1, students on more than 50 college and high school campuses across the country participated in the National Student Walkout—We All Live in Jena. It was called by the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, Sankofa Community Empowerment, the National Hip Hop Political Convention, and others.

"When I found out about the Jena Six, I saw this as an opportunity for a springboard to fight against institutional racism," said Asher Callender, 19, who joined the walkout of more than 100 in New York City. A student at Bushwick Community High School, Callender is one of the Bushwick 32—a group of youth arrested in May by cops in Brooklyn, New York, for "unlawful assembly" and "disorderly conduct" while on their way to a friend's funeral.

Ashley Robertson traveled to Jena September 20 from New Orleans' Xavier University, which sent three buses and 13 cars. Some students from Xavier went back to Jena September 29–30 to see what they could do to help. "They keep saying in the papers that the Black students are at fault," Robertson said. "But the school administration did nothing to address the discrimination. It has to be held responsible for helping to build up the tension over the months."

Ben O'Shaughnessy contributed to this article from New York.



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

Protesters at September 20 march in Jena, Louisiana.

Cuban Five

Continued from page 6

Cuban Five.

"These five men were in the United States to gather information about groups that have carried out terrorist attacks on Cuba," said Carlos Barros, deputy chief of the Cuban Interests Section, who introduced the film.

Earlier that day 20 people attended a press conference and rally outside the Justice Department to demand the release of the five Cubans.

Ignacio Meneses, a coordinator of the National Network On Cuba, spoke at both events and urged people to attend a November 9–11 solidarity conference in Toronto, Canada, in which relatives of the five Cubans will participate.

Olga Salanueva and Adriana Pérez, wives of two of the imprisoned Cuban revolutionaries, have been trying for eight years to visit their husbands in jail. Washington has denied them visas each time they applied.

Swedish military

Continued from page 3

large weapons and military industry. SAAB produces JAS military planes that compete with U.S.-built F16s. Kockums produces military ships and submarines, and Bofors produces howitzers and other cannons.

The Swedish government bought two-thirds of the goods from military production the last six years. In recent years, the portion of exports has increased.

The budget presented by the government September 19 also includes tax raises on gas and tobacco, as well as lower sick pay and unemployment benefits for part-time workers. Tax breaks for people who hire maids and gardeners to work in their private homes, so called domestic services, have been extended further.

‘Morality is a product of social development’

Below is an excerpt from Their Morals and Ours: The Class Foundations of Moral Practice *by Leon Trotsky, one of Pathfinder’s Books of the Month for October. In this collection of writings from the 1930s, the Russian revolutionary leader answers disillusioned intellectuals who attempted to rationalize their departure from revolutionary Marxism with the argument that an abstract notion of morality, not the necessities of the class struggle, should be the guiding principle for those who fight to create more rational and humane circumstances of life. Copyright © 1969 Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY LEON TROTSKY

Whoever does not care to return to Moses, Christ, or Mohammed; whoever is not satisfied with eclectic *hodge-podges* must acknowledge that morality is a product of social development; that there is nothing immutable about it; that it serves social interests; that these interests are contradictory; that morality more than any other form of ideology has a class character. . . .

The norms of “obligatory” morality are in reality filled with class, that is, antagonistic content. The moral norm becomes the more categoric the less it is “obligatory upon all.” The solidarity of workers, especially of strikers or barricade fighters, is incomparably more “categoric” than human solidarity in general.



“Morality is a function of the class struggle,” writes Trotsky. “The sharpening of the class struggle . . . irrevocably destroyed [democratic] morality.” Above, strikers try to rescue a co-worker from arrest during a July 9, 1934, picket line at Seabrook Farms in New Jersey.

The bourgeoisie, which far surpasses the proletariat in the completeness and irreconcilability of its class consciousness, is vitally interested in imposing *its* moral philosophy upon the exploited masses. It is exactly for this purpose that the concrete norms of the bourgeois catechism are concealed under moral abstractions patronized by religion, philosophy, or by that hybrid which is called “common sense.” The appeal to abstract norms is not a disinterested philosophical mistake but a necessary element in the mechanics of class deception. The exposure of this deceit which retains the tradition of thousands of years is the first duty of a proletarian revolutionist.

In order to guarantee the triumph of their interests in big questions, the ruling classes are constrained to make concessions on secondary questions, naturally only so long as these concessions are reconciled in the bookkeeping. During the epoch of capitalist upsurge especially in the last few decades before the World War, these concessions, at least in relation to the top layers of the proletariat, were of a completely genuine nature. Industry at that time expanded almost uninterruptedly. The prosperity of the civilized nations increased—partially, too, that of the toiling masses. Democracy appeared solid. Workers’ organizations grew. At the same time reformist tendencies deepened. The relations between the classes softened, at least outwardly. Thus certain elementary moral precepts in social relations were established along with the norms of democracy and the habits of class collaboration. The impression was created of an ever more free, more just, and more humane society. The rising line of progress seemed infinite to “common sense.”

Instead, however, war broke out with a train of convulsions, crises, catastrophes, epidemics, and bestiality. The economic life of humankind landed in an impasse. The class antagonisms became sharp and naked. The safety valves of democracy began to explode one after the other. The elementary moral precepts turned out to be even more fragile than the democratic institutions and reformist illusions. Lying, slander, bribery, venality, coercion, murder, grew to unprecedented dimensions. To a stunned simpleton all these vexations seem a temporary result of war. Actually they were and remain manifestations of imperialist decline. The decay of capitalism denotes the decay of contemporary society with its laws and morals.

The “synthesis” of imperialist turpitude is fascism, directly begotten of the bankruptcy of bourgeois democracy confronted with the problems of the imperialist epoch. Remnants of democracy continue still to exist only in the rich capitalist aristocracies: For each “democrat” in England, France, Holland, Belgium, there is a certain number of colonial slaves; “Sixty Families” dominate the democracy of the United States, and so forth. Moreover, shoots of fascism grow rapidly in all democracies. Stalinism in its turn is the product of imperialist pressure upon a backward and isolated workers’ state, a symmetrical complement in its own genre to fascism.

While idealistic philistines—among whom anarchists of course occupy first place—tirelessly unmask Marxist “amoralism” in their press, the American trusts, according to John L. Lewis (CIO), are spending not less than $80,000,000 a year on the practical struggle against revolutionary “demoralization,” that is, espionage, bribery of workers, frame-ups, and dark-alley murders. The categorical imperative sometimes chooses circuitous ways for its triumph!

Let us note in justice that the most sincere and at the same time the most limited petty-bourgeois moralists still live even today in the idealized memories of yesterday and hope for its return. They do not understand that morality is a function of the class struggle; that democratic morality corresponds to the epoch of liberal and progressive capitalism; that the sharpening of the class struggle in passing through its latest phase definitively and irrevocably destroyed this morality; that in its place came the morality of fascism on one side, on the other the morality of proletarian revolution.

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EDITORIAL

Mobilize to fight racist attacks

The release of Mychal Bell on bail this week is a step toward justice for the Jena Six. It was a result of successful actions in Jena, Louisiana, and across the country on September 20.

The Jena Six case starts with the noose—a symbol of terror from the days when lynchings by the Ku Klux Klan and other racist gangs were used to roll back gains made by freed slaves, to break the possibilities of an alliance between toiling Blacks and whites, and to impose second-class status on Blacks. In the decades between Radical Reconstruction and the civil rights movement, thousands of Blacks were killed at the hands of lynch mobs. Lynchings were commonly used to drive Blacks off the land. Rightist gangs also targeted immigrants and Jews.

Refusing to be cowed by such violence, Blacks over the decades convinced the overwhelming majority of working people in the United States that lynchings are unacceptable. Black workers helped lead battles that formed the industrial union movement in the 1930s, increasing their confidence to fight racist terror and legal segregation. They fought to end discrimination in the armed forces and war industries during World War II. Through mass, proletarian-led battles in the 1950s and '60s, the legal Jim Crow segregation system was overthrown.

As one Tennessee farmer told the *Militant* this week, the Jena Six case "smells of the past." Hundreds of thousands—by marching or by wearing black in solidarity—have demonstrated their refusal to go back to that past.

The New Orleans *Times-Picayune* reports that nooses have been hung at several other schools since the Jena Six case started getting national attention. In Anoka, Minnesota, racists burned a 10-foot by 6-foot cross into the lawn of a Black resident. Added to this is the beating of a Black student in Florida, racist vandalism at the Chicago Militant Labor Forum hall, and other acts of vigilantism.

These rightist attacks must be answered. They are attempts to take back ground lost when workers, farmers, and students poured out by the tens of thousands to demand justice for the Jena Six.

Street actions, speak-outs, and other public protests are the way to push back vigilantism and win justice for the Jena Six, not reliance on "hate crime" legislation or the courts. The capitalist "justice" system is stacked against workers, especially Blacks, from the start. The only way to force some justice is by the kind of massive mobilizations we have witnessed in recent weeks.

Washington debates Iraq partition

Continued from front page

trend toward local control, if you will, or local governance."

Dallas-based Hunt Oil Company signed a production-sharing agreement with the KRG in northern Iraq in September. U.S. State Department officials said the deal may be at cross-purposes with the efforts of the national government to craft an oil law acceptable to the Kurdish, Sunni Arab, and Shiite sections of Iraq's ruling class.

In the south of Iraq, the British force in Basra is being reduced by 1,000 and moving from a combat role to training and backup, British prime minister Gordon Brown announced October 2.

"[W]ithin the next two months we can move to provincial control," Brown said, "that is Iraqis taking responsibility for their security in the whole of Basra."

The Iraqis Brown refers to are wealthy capitalist families and their armed gangs working in collusion with imperialism.

"In the town of Abu Al-Khaseeb, south of the city, the newly rich are building palatial homes next to mud huts," reported a September 19 *Christian Science Monitor* dispatch from Basra. "The mansions often belong to those who have been able to cash in on the brisk business in the town's Abu Flous port, which is one of the province's main four ports and is widely considered to be controlled by the mafialike family, Bayet Ashour, and certain militias."

A local resident, Jalal Ali, told the paper, "You can only work at the port if you join a militia. I thought about it, but then my two cousins who had joined were badly wounded in a clash."

Washington's most recent military offensive has been based on the assumption—now affirmed in fact—that the occupation forces would find willing accomplices at the local level.

The plan was also based on the assumption that the two main contending factions in the Shiite ruling class—the Jaysh al Mahdi led by Moqtada al-Sadr, and the Badr Corps led by Abdul Aziz al-Hakim—have little to gain from a continuing confrontation with U.S. occupation forces. They both have substantial influence in the Shiite-dominated Iraqi government in Baghdad, and in southern Iraq, where the vast majority of the country's oil reserves are located.

As a result, the offensive has focused mainly on the Sunni Arab and mixed neighborhoods in the capital city of Baghdad and surrounding provinces.

The offensive itself has extended the fragmentation of the country down to the level of the neighborhood. In the capital, U.S.-led forces have divided the city into separate districts and then set up small bases, called Joint Security Stations, in scores of neighborhoods. Since June, these operations have spread from Baghdad into Anbar province, Baqoubah, and Diyala.

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GM contract guts healthcare, wages

BY CINDY JAQUITH

The big business press is crowing about the new contract agreement between General Motors (GM) and the United Auto Workers union (UAW). GM stock rose 9.4 percent after the contract was announced.

The *Wall Street Journal* headlined its story: "GM Labor Deal Ushers In New Era for Auto Industry." The *Financial Times* said the agreement "represents a milestone in efforts by U.S. companies to shift health-care costs to their workers."

Under the contract, GM will no longer be responsible for the medical insurance of its current employees, retirees, or spouses. Health-care costs will instead be paid out through a trust fund called a Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association (VEBA), which the UAW will manage. GM will put about $36 billion into the VEBA. That's about 70 percent of the $51 billion liability the company has for health insurance. The remaining 30 percent will supposedly come from investment of VEBA funds.

In the United States, GM employs 74,000 workers and pays benefits to 340,000 retirees.

UAW president Ron Gettelfinger praised the VEBA, saying it "will secure the benefits of our retirees and every seniority employee . . . and that stretches out in our projections for the next 80 years."

That's not the way it worked out for UAW members at Caterpillar, Inc. They signed a contract with the company in 1998 that established a VEBA of $32.3 million. The money lasted six years. Today, 20,000 Caterpillar retirees have to cover their own medical costs.

The auto bosses are also gleeful over the attacks on union rights and wages codified in the agreement. The new contract introduces a permanent two-tier wage and benefit structure in GM plants. The new workers GM hires for "noncore positions" will earn far lower wages and have 401(k) plans instead of a pension. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that GM will be able to "define some entry-level production work and skilled-trade positions as a 'noncore position,' whereby they get paid about half or less" what GM workers currently earn. The *Journal* estimated GM could turn some 24,000 of its current 74,000 jobs into "noncore positions."

To win the UAW officials' agreement to these onerous terms, GM promised to maintain current jobs and invest in some plants. The company also agreed to increase retiree pensions by $700 a year, which amounts to $58 a month. GM will pay a $3,000 signing bonus, but there is no wage increase.

The contract, once accepted by the union membership, will bring unionized auto workers much closer to the conditions faced by nonunion auto workers in the United States. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "The raw hourly wages of U.S. auto workers employed by Asian auto makers, such as Toyota, Honda and Nissan, are on par with wages on Detroit factory floors—roughly $25 an hour. It's the benefits that create the gap." Toyota, for example, pays health insurance premiums only for its workers, not their families. The *Journal* estimated that in terms of benefits, the nonunion plants pay $25 to $30 an hour less than GM.

With this contract GM has gone a long way toward closing that gap, at the expense of the health, standard of living, and working conditions of the UAW membership. Ford and Chrysler can be expected to do the same.

Long Island raids

Continued from front page

tinue terrorizing families, and breaking families apart," said Henríquez at the September 27 rally. Fifty relatives, supporters, and immigrants rights advocates joined the action calling for an end to the raids, according to the New York daily *Newsday*.

The day after the protest, complaining about "lack of communication" with ICE officers, Nassau County police commissioner Lawrence Mulvey said they would stop cooperating, "unless these issues are ironed out." At the time of the announcement, however, joint raids had already been carried out for four days.